

Officials transfer moose to establish herd in central Utah

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Deseret News sports writer

1-29-87

For the first time in eight years, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources gave new mailing addresses to moose. Earlier this month, 30 moose were caught up north, in Weber Canyon, and moved south, to the Scofield-Joe's Valley area.

Outdoor notes

The idea behind the moves is to try and establish a herd in the central part of the state. Earlier tries, however, have failed.

In 1973, two bulls, nine cows and seven calves were darted with drugs and moved into areas around Scofield. In 1974, one bull, 11 cows and seven calves were moved into the same area. And in 1978, two more bulls and four cows were moved into the same general area. Total: 43 moose.

Since 1973, at least 60 moose, that authorities know about, have been illegally killed in that area of the state. They were, in most cases, shot and left. Poached.

"Because of the tremendous number of poached animals, we haven't been able to establish a herd there. We'd like to. But, if they keep killing the animals, then we'll just have to forget it," said Grant Jense, big game program coordinator for the DWR.

This most recent move was made possible through the sale of one special moose permits last year. It went to high bidder for \$16,500. That money paid for the four-day program during which four bulls, 16 cows and six calves were caught and moved.

Four went into the Fish Creek drainage above Scofield, the remaining 26 into the Joe's Valley area.

Back in the 1970s, DWR officials came under fire when some of the moose being darted with drugs and died.

According to Jense, new drugs are safer and much easier to use.

"Under the old method, we'd have to use about 10 cc of drug. This made the dart heavy and difficult to shoot. With the new drugs, we only use about 2 cc of drug. It puts the animal down in less time and with no problems afterwards," he said.

A small helicopter was used in spotting and darting the animals. A larger helicopter was used to pick up the animals and fly them to waiting horse trailers for transportation south.

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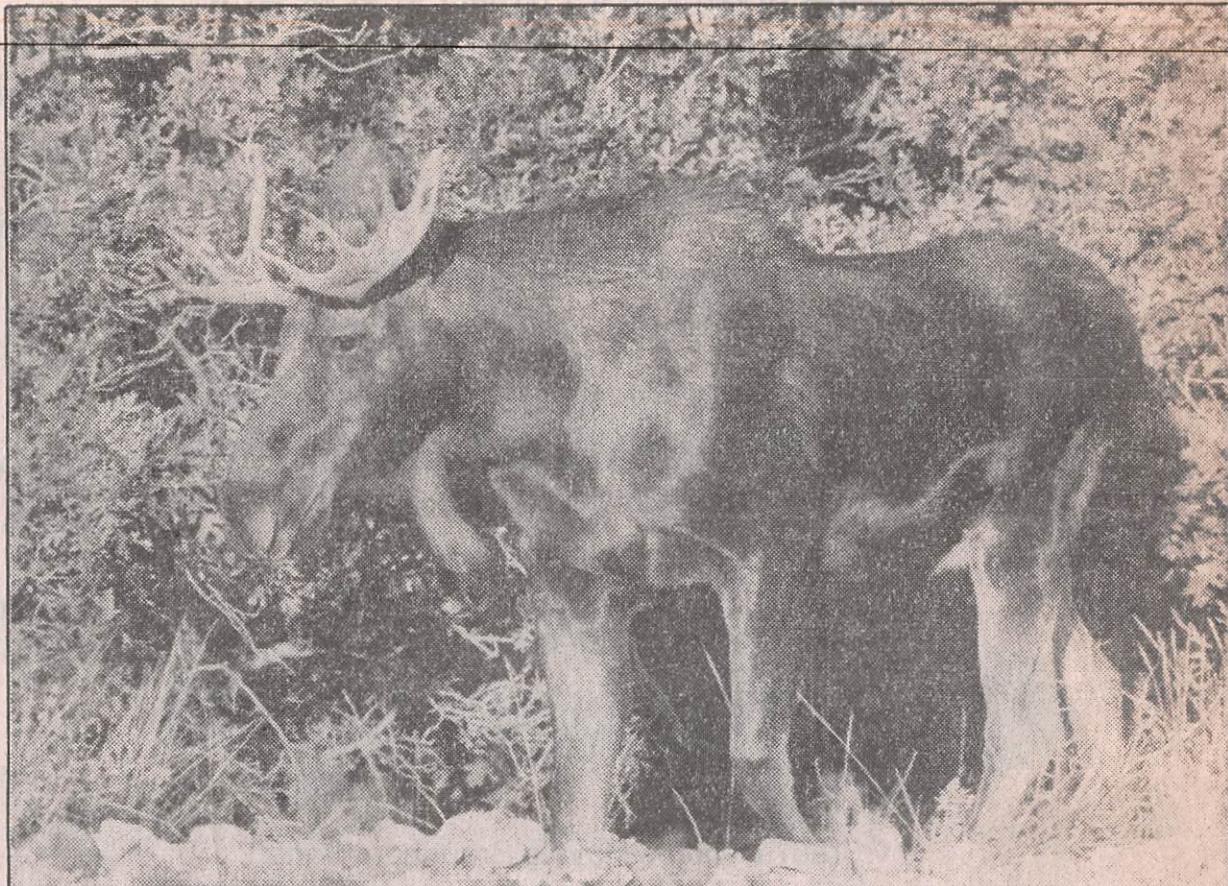
BIG GAME HUNTS SET — Last Thursday, the Utah Board of Big Game Control met to set the quotas and dates for the once-in-a-lifetime hunts for moose, buffalo, desert big horn sheep and Rocky Mountain goats.

They will meet again in early May to establish quotas and dates for the remaining big game hunts — elk, deer and antelope.

Purpose of the early meeting is to give hunters more time to plan a hunt they can make but once in their lifetime. Those getting permits, successful or not on their respective hunts, can never apply again for that hunt.

This year the board approved issuing 145 resident and 17 non-resident moose permits, 50 resident and 5 non-resident buffalo permits, 10 resident sheep permits and 4 resident goat permits.

Hunters can apply to Utah Division of Wildlife Resources offices during the month of February. The draw-



Deseret News file photo: Jack Monson

Attempts to establish a moose herd in central Utah have been thwarted by poachers.

ing will be held in March.

Moose hunts fall into three separate seasons — Sept. 12-30, Sept. 5-30 and Oct. 31-Nov. 30. Fees are \$102 for residents, \$1,002 for non-residents.

The regular buffalo hunt, on the Henry Mountains, will again be broken down into two seasons — 22 hunters will hunt Oct. 3-12, 33 more will hunt Nov. 7-28.

Because of low lamb counts, the number of big horn sheep permits was reduced this year. Two hunters will hunt the North San Juan unit Sept. 12-Oct. 11, four will hunt the South San Juan unit Sept. 12-Oct. 11, two will hunt the Potash unit Sept. 12-Oct. 30 and two will hunt the Escalante River unit, Sept. 12-Oct. 30.

And, four hunters will hunt for Rocky Mountain goats Sept. 12-Oct. 11 in the Lone Peak area.

Fees for buffalo, sheep and goats are \$202 for residents and \$1,002 for nonresidents.

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SPEAKING OF BUFFALO — The board also stepped in to help set up a buffalo hunt on Antelope Island.

When the state purchased the island, a herd of buffalo came in the deal. The herd is now to a point where it must be thinned out. Counts show there are around 380 animals on the island.

Instead of falling under the umbrella of the DWR, however, the buffalo are said to be the property of the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation.

The two agencies, however, will be working together on this first buffalo hunt on the island.

Under board approval, there will be

13 resident and two non-resident permits issued. Hunt dates will be Nov. 28-Dec. 4, Dec. 5-11 and Dec. 1-18.

Unlike the DWR-run hunt on the Henry Mountains, where hunters do their own planning and hunting, these hunts will be run through a private business.

Fees will be \$802 for residents, \$1,602 for the two nonresident permits.

The price will include transportation to, from and around the island, the permit, food for up to four days and camping. Permit applications can be made by mail to the Utah Big Game Permit Applications, P.O. Box 16500, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116. All fees must accompany the application.

Anyone who has received a Utah buffalo permit in the past cannot apply for this hunt.

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